

Daily Press Briefing: Discussion of China

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June 25, 2013

Patrick Ventrell, Director, Press Office
Daily Press Briefing, Selections on China
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Has Secretary Kerry got in touch with the Chinese Foreign Minister or Chinese Presidency in any way?

MR. VENTRELL: I'm not sure that – I don't have any calls to read out from his travel while he's been in India and now Saudi Arabia. I believe they're just touched down on Kuwait. But I don't have any calls to read out. I do think that there will be a chance to see his counterpart on the following stop at the meetings on ASEAN. So I think there's potentially a scheduled meeting there.

QUESTION: Do you expect that to be brought up before S&ED?

MR. VENTRELL: I mean, again, we're still a few days out from that. I don't want to predict the bilateral agenda. But we will raise key issues, certainly.

QUESTION: Do you have anything on this American executive being confined by the Chinese worker because those worker claim that they haven't been paid for two months, and --

MR. VENTRELL: Nothing beyond what I said yesterday. So this came up yesterday, and I addressed that.

June 24, 2013

**Patrick Ventrell, Director, Press Office
Daily Press Briefing, Selections on China
Washington, DC**

MR. VENTRELL: So let me just speak broadly, that we, over the weekend, the United States, has been in touch via diplomatic and law enforcement channels with a number of countries which Mr. Snowden might transit or that could serve as final destinations. I'm not going to get into the detail of all the diplomatic exchanges, but we're advising these governments that Mr. Snowden is wanted on serious felony charges, and as such he should not be allowed to proceed in any further international travel other than is necessary to return to the United States. So that's the broad point that we're making a series of governments. Regardless of the overall relationship, these are the kind of messages that we're relaying, that we want the law enforcement cooperation if necessary from these countries.

I will make a larger point about what happened in Hong Kong. We are deeply disappointed by the decision of the authorities in Hong Kong to permit Mr. Snowden to flee despite a legally valid U.S. request to arrest him for purposes of his extradition under the U.S.-Hong Kong Surrender Agreement. We've registered our strong objections to the authorities in Hong Kong as well as to the Chinese Government through diplomatic channels, and we've noted that such behavior is detrimental to U.S.-Hong Kong and U.S.-China bilateral relations.

Having said that, we now know that he's in – understand that he's in Russian territory. And so, given our intensified cooperation working with Russia on law enforcement matters, including returning numerous high-level criminals back to Russia at the request of the Russian Government, we hope that the Russian Government will look at all available options to return Mr. Snowden back to the U.S. to face justice for the crimes with which he's charged.

QUESTION: So can you tell us which countries are the destinations that you mentioned?

MR. VENTRELL: I mean, again, I'm not sure I'm going to list out one by one, but there have been some countries in Latin America, for instance, that were potential destinations, and we've been in touch with the governments of those countries.

QUESTION: And I'm not sure I understood what you were saying about some of the chats with Russians. Were you saying that there might be some kind of exchange agreement set up?

MR. VENTRELL: Well, we have been in direct touch with the Russians – Deputy Secretary Burns at his level, certainly our Ambassador and other officials at the Embassy. I think the Department of Justice has been in touch at a very high level. I encourage you to ask them for details of their readouts in the law enforcement channels. But diplomatically, we've been in touch at a high level and making that point that we'd like him returned to the United States.

QUESTION: So is it your understanding that he's still in Russian territory?

MR. VENTRELL: I don't have any information to indicate otherwise at this point.

QUESTION: Because I believe that Julian Assange was on a call this morning saying that he's left, and he's left with a refugee document that was given to him by Ecuador.

MR. VENTRELL: I mean, we'd heard that from Wikileaks. I don't know if he was referring to the initial travel from Hong Kong to Russia or otherwise, but I don't have any information to verify that he's left Russian territory.

QUESTION: Is this – if – assuming he does leave Russia and goes to another third country – and we know he's already left Chinese territory – how damaging is this to your relationship with those two countries?

MR. VENTRELL: Well, again, I can't speculate on the Russian aspect, because we're still in discussion with them. But certainly with the Chinese relationship, it does have a negative impact. We were very clear about our interest in this individual, and we've emphasized the importance of building mutual trust, and this has dealt a serious setback. If we can't count on them to honor a legal extradition treaty, then there's a significant problem. So this is something we're raising very directly with the Chinese. In terms of the Russians, we're continuing to be in dialogue with them about that situation.

QUESTION: And what actual consequences are there, then, for China?

MR. VENTRELL: Again, I'm not going to speculate on consequences at this point, but you've seen through the broad arc of our improving relations with China that we've worked through norms-based and rule of law and other norms of cooperation and international standards. And when they don't comply with international standards in this manner, it certainly has a negative impact.

QUESTION: Can we step back for a second?

MR. VENTRELL: Sure.

QUESTION: When you say that this was a legal U.S. request, and the Hong Kong authorities have said that there were problems with the request and thus they weren't able to prevent Snowden from leaving the country, can you describe the discrepancies?

MR. VENTRELL: Well, look. For us, we're just not buying that this was a technical decision by a Hong Kong immigration official. This was a deliberate choice by the government to release a fugitive despite a valid arrest warrant. And that decision, as I said, unquestionably has a negative impact on the U.S.-China relationship.

In terms of – again, some of us have talked about the passport or some of the different technical measures that were taken in terms of a passport or travel documents. Again, we have to be a little bit careful because of the Privacy Act in talking about specific passports, but I do want to walk you through all the broader frame of what we do with passports here at the State Department.

We do revoke passports at the request of law enforcement authorities. We do so expeditiously when the request is received. When the Department of State revokes a passport, that information is shared through databases accessible by law enforcement and various border agencies around the world, including INTERPOL, to prevent persons from traveling on revoked passports.

And then, though the Privacy Act prohibits me from talking about Mr. Snowden's passport specifically, I can say that the Hong Kong authorities were well aware of our interest in Mr. Snowden and had plenty of time to prohibited his travel. So they were well aware. Clearly, the Department of Justice can provide you more granularity on the day-by-day actions we took in terms of sharing information with them, including some of the public information that's available.

Jill, go ahead.

QUESTION: Patrick when you say just not buying it, I mean, that's pretty strong for a diplomat. What is going on here? I mean, what – how can you – what does that say about the relationship with China if they can defiantly just push it back in your face?

And the Russians so far are not cooperating either.

MR. VENTRELL: Well, again, I can't speculate or get in the heads of another country or – on their motivations. But as I mentioned before, what we're trying to work through the Chinese with on our broader relationship are healthy norms of cooperation based on international standards. And so when you have something that is a relatively straightforward law enforcement cooperation matter and it's not dealt with that way, it has an impact.

QUESTION: And "impact" again. I mean, just, you can't --

MR. VENTRELL: Again, I know that --

QUESTION: -- tell us specifically, but I mean, even areas? Economically, diplomatically, what?

MR. VENTRELL: I don't want to speculate. This just happened less than 24 hours ago or a little more than 24 hours ago, so I don't want to speculate. But certainly for us as we've – this is not in the pattern of some of the more positive steps we've seen with China in terms of increased collaboration and cooperation across a broad area of subjects.

Josh, go ahead.

QUESTION: So you're placing the blame pretty squarely here on the Beijing government, not the Hong Kong government. You talk about the U.S.-China relationship. Can you talk about the pieces of evidence that you've seen that assure you that this was a decision made in Beijing and not in Hong Kong?

MR. VENTRELL: I mean, I'll leave it up to the Hong Kong authorities to describe their decision making in relationship to the central government. But as I said, this will have an impact both on U.S.-Hong Kong relations and on U.S.-China relations.

QUESTION: You said -- you were talking about U.S.-China relations, so you at least have come to the conclusion that Beijing was involved in this decision making in some --

MR. VENTRELL: Again, as we said, this is not a technical sort of immigration paperwork kind of matter taken at the Hong Kong level.

QUESTION: That's yes? So Beijing was involved? I mean --

MR. VENTRELL: I mean, again, I'll let them clarify. But I think you all know the legal status of Hong Kong. I don't have to provide more detail on that.

QUESTION: Is there another reason that the U.S.-China relationship would suffer due to a decision made by the Hong Kong authorities alone?

MR. VENTRELL: Again, we're concerned because of this specific incident, yes.

Guy, go ahead.

QUESTION: Sorry to go around in a circle on this --

MR. VENTRELL: Sure.

QUESTION: -- with you, Patrick, but just to clarify: So the Secretary of State said there will be consequences for these countries that facilitate Mr. Snowden's flight. And you're just not commenting now on what those consequences would be. Is that --

MR. VENTRELL: Nor did the Secretary yet. I mean, this is something that's just happened. But the point is whether we have a really solid and warm relationship with a country or a less cooperative relationship, there are international standards of law enforcement cooperation that are important, and we expect other countries to abide by these international standards.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MR. VENTRELL: And it has a consequence on our ability to have the wider range of the relationship.

QUESTION: I understand that the Ecuadorian Foreign Minister made a statement this morning saying that they've received a foreign – a request from Mr. Snowden for asylum and that they were considering it. But has the U.S. had any kind of exchange with Ecuador on this matter at all yet?

MR. VENTRELL: We have been in touch with Ecuador. As I mentioned, there are a number of countries that were potential destinations we've been in touch with. And we've made our point clear that, as I said, this is somebody who is wanted on criminal felony charges here in the United States and we'd like him returned to the United States to face justice.

QUESTION: What about Cuba? Has the U.S. had any contact with Cuba?

MR. VENTRELL: I'll have to check if that was directly or through our Interests Section or how we might have had communication with Cuba, but certainly they were one of the interested parties. I'd have to check on the actual mode of that communication, but we do have ways of getting in touch with the Cuban Government, certainly.

QUESTION: And Patrick, in terms of what you can really do other than, let's say, urging them or pushing them to do something, what can the United States do to get him back at this point?

MR. VENTRELL: Again, I'm just not going to speculate exactly, but you know how relationships work. We have broad relationships and we cooperate on interests of mutual concern. And so there's an ability to cooperate more or less on areas of mutual concern, and that's how --

QUESTION: I mean to actually get him, not down the road --

MR. VENTRELL: Oh, in terms of actually getting him?

QUESTION: Right now, yeah.

MR. VENTRELL: Well, we'll continue to work through law enforcement channels. I think – I really refer you to the Department of Justice for the outreach they've done through law enforcement channels, but they've been pretty clear to these countries and to Russia in particular our interest and why we'd like him returned to face justice for these very serious criminal charges.

QUESTION: And this morning in a call-in with Julian Assange, he said that the U.S. is bullying these other countries. What do you say to that?

MR. VENTRELL: Well, Jill, I reject that. I mean, we are having a normal diplomatic and law enforcement conversation with these countries about somebody who is charged with serious

felony charges. That doesn't mean that he's guilty; it means that he should face justice just as everybody does in our system.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) about the South China Morning Post has just published a new report in which it quotes Snowden as saying that he deliberately took the job with Booz Allen Hamilton in order to be able to obtain information that he could then leak. Does this change, heighten the desire of the U.S. Government to bring him in? And are you concerned that he may, if he perhaps is still in Russia, may be sharing some of that information?

MR. VENTRELL: Look, I can't speculate on motivations. Clearly, an oath was violated. Clearly, when you disclose sensitive national security information, classified information, that's a violation of the law. And so for us that's -- those are very serious charges. And I can't speculate on why he did so, but clearly, it does harm to the United States.

QUESTION: And in a related vein, are you able to say either in general terms or in specific terms how many contractors are working for the U.S. State Department on intelligence matters, since that is part and parcel of the work that happens, the information that has to be kept classified?

MR. VENTRELL: Again, I'm not sure that I could get into a level or a number of people that have security clearances or work in our Bureau of Intelligence and Research, but we do have communication, clearly, with the intelligence community. I'm just probably not going to be able to get into a precise number there.

QUESTION: But are they are all civilian employees of the State Department, or are they contractors?

MR. VENTRELL: I mean, we have civilians and we also have contractors who work and do tasks for the State Department. I don't know for each level of handling of information who would be doing that, but --

QUESTION: Thanks. You talked in some detail about U.S. interactions with the Hong Kong government --

MR. VENTRELL: Yeah.

QUESTION: -- before Snowden left Hong Kong. Could you talk to a similar level of detail about U.S. interactions with the Beijing government before Snowden left?

MR. VENTRELL: Just to say that this was raised at a high level as well with the government in Beijing.

QUESTION: How high?

MR. VENTRELL: At the ambassadorial level.

QUESTION: Has Interpol put out a red notice, or has the Administration asked Interpol to put out a red notice at this point?

MR. VENTRELL: My colleague Jay Carney talked about this a little bit already at his briefing and described that. I really refer you to DOJ, but my understanding is red notices are for people where we don't know where they are. So I'm not aware one way or another whether we have the type of passport information – once there's a revocation, would generally be available in Interpol's databases.

So those are sort of – there's been a little bit of confusion. And I just want to be very clear here. There was some media reporting that somehow the State Department had dropped the ball or we didn't proceed as we needed to on this case, and I just want to outright reject that, that we have very much done our duty and done what's necessary in expediting any processes that we have an involvement on. And certainly in terms of our diplomatic communication and the channel that we provide to some of these governments has been very active. So I just want to reject some of that reporting. Obviously, because of the Privacy Act, there's some restrictions on how much I can say, but it has been frustrating to some of us to watch some news reporting implying something in that direction which is simply not true.

QUESTION: It's been noted, just to follow up very quickly, that the U.S. has been pretty critical of countries like China and Russia for their freedom of speech rights or their human rights, and so it would come as little surprise where China, Russia would not be particularly aggressive in helping the U.S. bring Snowden back or extradite him in any way.

Can you say anything more about what kind of efforts will be taken to step up beyond what would usually be done in light of that kind of diplomatic relationship?

MR. VENTRELL: I mean, just to say there is a certain irony here, of course, that somebody who says that he's about freedom of the internet and freedom of information, of course, would seek out some of these countries, and particularly you don't see him standing up for the free flow of information in some of these countries that don't always have that. But again, as I said, I'm not going to speculate on future consequences. But the – in our communication with these governments what we've made clear is that we want to do this through our law enforcement cooperation. They have criminals at times that they're looking for; we have criminals at times that we're seeking to face justice here.

QUESTION: Patrick, can I get to the question that --

MR. VENTRELL: Let's go, Jo. Go ahead.

QUESTION: -- that Laura just raised, the question about freedom of information. I mean, there are some people who – the supporters of Snowden would say that he’s doing precisely what you would want people in Russia or China to do, which is blowing the whistle on excessive state snooping and spying on its own citizens. Secretary Kerry described Edward Snowden on the weekend as a traitor to his country. That seems pretty strong language.

MR. VENTRELL: Well, it is, and it is for a reason, because we’re talking about very different things here. On the one hand, you’re talking about some of our intelligence programs, which again, I can’t always get into detail, but broadly speaking are to help keep us safe, to go after terrorists, and that are done in a legal way through our different branches of government, including with judicial oversight, including through the Congress. And so this is rules-based and done in a – in that manner, in contrast to some countries who are trying to rob economic information or go after human rights organizations or people trying to speak freely in their own country. So they’re very different ideas and they shouldn’t be conflated.

QUESTION: You could argue that Edward Snowden, all he did was actually tell us what’s going on. He didn’t actually leak any of the information that was garnered through those programs. He just told us it was happening.

MR. VENTRELL: Well, from our perspective he leaked classified information, and that’s a serious crime in this country. Having said that, the United States has long been a supporter of freedom of access to the internet, of free communication, and certainly we do these programs to help keep the American people safe and to help keep people safe in other countries by sharing tips on terrorists, potential terrorist attacks, and to keep others safe. So there’s really a pretty strong distinction there, and we feel pretty strongly about it.

Jill.

QUESTION: Patrick, this is almost more a technical question. The WikiLeaks people have described some type of asylum document that he traveled on. If his passport is revoked, can you actually travel on – what is an asylum document, and can you travel on it? Does that mean anything to you?

MR. VENTRELL: I’m not familiar with the Ecuadorian legal system and with what travel documents they may have or under what grounds they would do it. I just can’t speculate on that. For us, the U.S. passport is the primary mode of travel for U.S. citizens. When somebody is convicted or is charged with serious criminal felony charges, we revoke the passport so that it’s only valid to return to the United States to face justice. But I just can’t speculate on what other travel documents may be issued by another country.

QUESTION: Well, I was thinking, let’s say that somebody came to the United States requesting asylum and they – their passport had been taken. Is there anything that the United States would give to that person that would bridge the gap if they don’t have a passport?

MR. VENTRELL: Well, that's kind of a hypothetical about --

QUESTION: I know, but I'm just trying to figure out how --

MR. VENTRELL: I'd really refer you to DHS. There are a number of different ways to enter the United States. Generally, it's through passports, but we have various forms of humanitarian parole and other things that work through the system. But I just don't want to speculate or make comparisons because it's a little bit oranges and apples, or apples and oranges, as you were.

QUESTION: I just want to make sure I have it absolutely clear. You have the oath that you're saying he violated, this is an oath he took as -- when he was a contractor for the NSA or when he was working for the CIA or --

MR. VENTRELL: Well, all of us who have access to classified information clearly make a pledge to our country and to protect that information. And so disclosing that information is a serious violation of our laws and of our standards and of the behavior we have within this government.

QUESTION: So it's when he was a contractor that he took that oath?

MR. VENTRELL: It includes contractors who have access to this information as well.

Okay.

QUESTION: Among the countries -- just to close this loop, among the countries that the U.S. is talking to, would that include Iceland? There's been some mention that he's applied for asylum, in Iceland as well.

MR. VENTRELL: I'm not sure if we've been in touch with Iceland. Again, I'm not sure I can get into every single country, but broadly speaking, the ones that you're seeing in the press are the countries we're in touch with, yes.

QUESTION: Okay. Julian Assange said that he had applied for asylum in Iceland, so --

MR. VENTRELL: I hadn't checked on that one in particular.

QUESTION: Okay.

QUESTION: The Hong Kong government offered a public explanation that our extradition request wasn't completed in a full and lawful manner, an explanation you've just rejected.

MR. VENTRELL: Yeah.

QUESTION: Did the Beijing government make a similar argument or did they have a separate argument?

MR. VENTRELL: I'm not sure about the argument, but we vehemently disagree with that characterization by the Hong Kong authorities, and I think the Department of Justice has laid out in pretty clear terms the type of information they provided and why it was legally valid in our opinion.

QUESTION: And what about the Beijing government, what's their explanation?

MR. VENTRELL: Again, I'm not sure if they provided an explanation. You'd have to ask them.

Luis.

QUESTION: Patrick, in the high-level discussions underway with the Russian Government right now, have we communicated to them the potential consequences they could face if they allow him to transit through?

MR. VENTRELL: Again, beyond saying that we've discussed how we've had an intensified pattern of law enforcement cooperation, how it's important to us, I'm really not going to get into the details of our diplomatic exchange. But I think you can tell by the sort of level of engagement that we've had that we take it very seriously. And I think the Russians certainly understand that.

QUESTION: So if you're making these pronouncements to the countries in the Western Hemisphere, are you making them equally as strong to Russia?

MR. VENTRELL: We're making it clear across the board regardless of which countries, and we do have a strong interest in him returning.

June 17, 2013

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on China

Washington, DC

QUESTION: One on China and Chen Guangcheng.

MS. PSAKI: Yeah.

QUESTION: Are you aware of any pressure the Chinese put on NYU or even on the – or if there was a – there were conversations between this government, this Administration, and the Chinese about his NYU stint?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I know NYU has spoken to this. Not that I'm aware of.

QUESTION: I'm asking if there was any government or --

MS. PSAKI: Not that I'm aware of, Matt. I mean, as you know – and Matt's referring, I think, as we all have seen, to Chen Guangcheng, who it was announced would no longer be at NYU. He was on a one-year fellowship there. Just as a reminder, NYU provided generous temporary support, including housing and a host of other support, to him. But I know NYU has spoken to this, and I would otherwise refer to them on conversations or other specifics.

June 12, 2013

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

**Daily Press Briefing, selections on China/Hong Kong
Washington, DC**

QUESTION: On this NSA surveillance by the government, Mr. Snowden is saying that the U.S. is bullying Hong Kong to obviously get him out of there. Do you have any response directly to what he is saying? And then, also, is the U.S. talking to Hong Kong directly now about this case, asking for any help, et cetera? Dare we also ask about extradition?

MS. PSAKI: I just don't have anything new on this for you.

QUESTION: Nothing at all?

MS. PSAKI: Nothing at all.

QUESTION: Not even a response to the bullying comment?

MS. PSAKI: I do not have anything new on it.

QUESTION: I have a related question though, from me.

MS. PSAKI: Okay.

QUESTION: The *South China Morning Post* have just published an interview with Snowden in which they're reporting they've seen NSA documents he's provided showing repeated U.S. hacking of computers in Hong Kong and China. Now, obviously, I wouldn't expect you comment on the documents themselves, but could you comment on the perception of double standards that exists given the repeated criticism of China cyber-attacks at weekend?

MS. PSAKI: Sure. I can broadly speak to that. And this is something that actually this weekend, when the White House did their briefing, they spoke to this as well. This is a case where obviously talking about cyber security with the Chinese Government, a topic of conversation both this past weekend and it will be again at the S&ED talks in July, is a priority to the U.S., as you know, and it's important for China as well.

I haven't seen those specific reports, I can't speak to them, but there is a difference between going after economic data and financial information that is part of these cyber-attacks, or seems to be, and an issue which is – the President has welcomed the debate on, which is – and the

Administration has welcomed the debate on, which is surveillance and going after people who mean to do harm. So there is a difference, and that would be what I would have to say on that.

QUESTION: So – and when you say going after people who aim to do harm, how is hacking computers in Hong Kong and China related to that?

MS. PSAKI: I wasn't speaking to that specifically. I thought you were asking me about the recent NSA reports.

QUESTION: Well, I'm asking about the perception that you have criticized China for the cyber-attacks, and today we have NSA documents reporting to show the U.S. attacking computers in China and Hong Kong.

MS. PSAKI: I just haven't seen those reports. So --

QUESTION: Can I ask one just quick procedural question on the extradition issue? Clearly, you can't comment on that directly, but how do extradition cases like this work in terms of the departmental responsibility? Would it have been the Department of State that would handle this? Is it a Justice matter? Do you act for Justice in contacting authorities like Hong Kong? How would it proceed if it does proceed?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I talked about this on Monday. We do have an extradition treaty with Hong Kong. Beyond that, in terms of the logistics of how it works in a case that involves interagencies, I just don't have that level of detail.

QUESTION: But is it – is extradition normally handled by State? Is it a request that State would make to a --

MS. PSAKI: State is certainly a part of it, but beyond that, every case is different. So I just don't have a -- more level of detail.

QUESTION: Just a clarification --

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- Mr. Snowden has not been declared a fugitive, has he? Through -- for extradition or --

MS. PSAKI: I wasn't speaking to that specific case.

QUESTION: Okay, but --

MS. PSAKI: As I mentioned, there are several agencies involved in this. ODNI has spoken extensively to this, and I'd point you to their comments.

QUESTION: So – but no, but my question is as long as he's not declared a fugitive, certainly there is no active extradition, is there?

MS. PSAKI: I'm just not going to speculate further on this case.

QUESTION: In response to Jill's original question, did you say that you're not going to talk about any – to say whether there have been any conversations between officials at the consulate general in Hong Kong or in Washington and officials in Hong Kong about this case?

MS. PSAKI: I just don't have any updates on that.

QUESTION: Can I ask that you recheck and find out (a) if there are such conversations taking place, if you will be able to say that there are, or if they – lawyers have basically just said, "Shut up" and don't say anything about it, and then two, if they don't say that, I would – it would be appreciated, I think, by all of us --

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

QUESTION: -- if you could let us know. Even if it's not talking about the contents of such conversations, it would seem to be negligent on behalf of this Administration if it was not in contact with officials in Hong Kong about this individual considering what the – at least people on the Hill have said about him and people within – people actually within the Administration.

MS. PSAKI: Well, Matt, I don't have any update, anything for you it.

QUESTION: I understand that, but --

MS. PSAKI: If I do, or if there's anything that can be shared, I understand the interest and I'm certainly venture to share that.

QUESTION: All right. And then the other thing is that I think that you will not be bound – or you will find that your lawyers will not bind you from talking about extradition in general and the fact –

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

QUESTION: -- and the role that you play as basically, I think, a courier for the Justice Department between the – I don't believe that State has any actual --

MS. PSAKI: I'm happy to get folks --

QUESTION: -- policy rule on this.

MS. PSAKI: -- in -- a rundown of the legal breakdown.

QUESTION: It would be --

QUESTION: I think it's about a paragraph worth of information.

MS. PSAKI: That is a paragraph of information. I just didn't have specifics on it.

QUESTION: We've talked about it in previous cases.

MS. PSAKI: We have talked about it, and I talked about it on Monday.

June 10, 2013

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on China (Hong Kong)

Washington, DC

QUESTION: I just have a couple things, and I realize you can't talk in specifics, but maybe in generalities. This has to do with Hong Kong and the extradition treaty. Do you know – I mean it seems as though this treaty has been used often since it came into force in '98. Do you have specifics on the numbers of how many people have gone in each direction, and whether there have been any denials of extradition?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have specific numbers or that level of detail. To your larger point, which is – we do have, and some have asked me this, an extradition agreement in force with Hong Kong, which a number of people have asked. But I don't have any specifics on how many times we've used it or anything along those lines.

QUESTION: Okay. Is it possible to find out? I'm less interested in how many times it's been used than how many times it may have been one side has asked for extradition and that has been denied.

MS. PSAKI: I'm sure we can look into what information is available.

QUESTION: And then just on the other thing: That treaty was negotiated by this building and Secretary Albright at the time very carefully so that people could not be – or would not be forced to – would not be extradited for political offenses.

Does this building or does anyone in this building find it somewhat ironic that we're currently looking at a situation where someone is potentially going to be using this – be using an argument for – on political prosecution to avoid being returned to the United States? Because when it was negotiated, that was never envisioned. It was always the idea that the U.S. could refuse to return someone to – or send someone to Hong Kong for political reasons there. Has this raised any eyebrows in the building?

MS. PSAKI: Well, Matt, given that I'm not going to comment on whether we've asked for extradition or will do so in the future --

QUESTION: Well, I'm not asking that.

MS. PSAKI: -- I'm not going to speculate on that. I can give you a little history, of course, here.

QUESTION: I just wonder if there's anyone in the Legal Adviser's office who is sick to their stomach or something – feeling some kind of strange emotions about the fact that it is – that the United States is now in a position – the Administration is now in a position where it could be

accused of pursuing politically motivated prosecutions, especially from – when it involves a part of the People’s Republic of China.

MS. PSAKI: Again, not that I’m aware of, Matt.

QUESTION: No? Okay.

MS. PSAKI: But I’m not going to speculate on whether we’re going to use it or not. Just to tell you that we do have an extradition treaty with Hong Kong.

QUESTION: You were just about to give us some history. That would be –

MS. PSAKI: Oh, sure.

QUESTION: Give me the rearview mirror, as it were.

MS. PSAKI: Through the rearview mirror.

QUESTION: Yes, yes.

QUESTION: What if it’s no value to them?

MS. PSAKI: Well, it was established – the extradition agreement with Hong Kong was signed in 1996 and entered into force in 1998. It is still in force, and we’ve actively used it over the years. I don’t have numbers to Matt’s earlier question. It is called the agreement – the U.S. has an extradition agreement with Hong Kong. It is called the Agreement Between the Government of the United States and the Government of Hong Kong for the Surrender of Fugitive Offenders. Beyond that, I think that’s the extent of my history, but a little for all of you.

QUESTION: Can you just give us any sense of how these recent developments involving Mr. Snowden have impacted this Department or created work for any particular bureaus? I mean, is there any involvement of the State Department at all in this case right now?

MS. PSAKI: I’m just not going to speculate on all of that or read all of that out to you here today.

QUESTION: Do you share the view expressed by other spokesmen and other Administration officials that this disclosure was seriously damaging to U.S. national security?

MS. PSAKI: Again, this has been extensively spoken to by the Department of Justice, by ODNI. They have put out a number of statements. I would point all of you to those.

QUESTION: American diplomats though also impacted?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I’m not aware of discussions at this point or demarches from governments. Of course, we always listen to our counterparts and are in close contact about a range of issues.

QUESTION: Have you talked to the Chinese Government or the Hong Kong Administration on the extradition issues?

MS. PSAKI: I just have nothing more on the extradition question for all of you. Just that we have a treaty.

QUESTION: In general on this treaty, do you communicate with the Chinese Government or the Hong Kong Administration?

MS. PSAKI: Again, I just don't have anything further you on it.

QUESTION: Have you been contacted by the other governments on the incident, I mean, about what is this PRISM, the content of PRISM, what was the nature of the work, et cetera, on this issues?

MS. PSAKI: Well, again, I think I spoke to this a little bit, in that I'm not aware of any discussions at a very high level or demarches from other governments. Broadly speaking – and maybe this will answer your question – these programs – and the President has spoken extensively to this, as have ODNI and others – but are used to obtain information on persons who would do harm. That information is used to protect human lives both here and abroad, not just in the United States. And these programs are designed and implemented in a manner consistent with a nation's rule of law based democratic system of government that respects individual civil liberties while providing security to its people. And they're also tailored to ensure that information is collected, utilized – and utilized as needed and that intrusions into privacy are minimized. So that's just a broad overview of, of course, what they do and what has been, of course, communicated.

QUESTION: Was Secretary Kerry aware of the existence of this program prior to The Guardian report?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have anything for you on that.

QUESTION: Who informed him of this report? Do you know how he learned about it?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have anything for you on that either.

June 7, 2013

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on China
Washington, DC

MS. PSAKI: The Secretary is in California, very important point. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Well, what's he doing in California?

MS. PSAKI: He is meeting with the Chinese in California. This is an assist. Thank you, Matt. He is meeting as part of, of course, the President's delegation to meet with the Chinese President in California. So that is another point of reference on how important our relationship with Asia --

QUESTION: So (inaudible)?

MS. PSAKI: Well, the White House has previewed this quite a great deal, so let me just give you kind of a quick overview of what they have said. This is, of course, the President's trip, and the Secretary is attending as a member of the delegation. But they will be meeting over the next couple of days. This is -- the discussions, they expect, will cover political, security, and economic issues. This is an opportunity for all of them to also get to know each other and continue to work on many of the key issues that we can work together on and raise issues where we have concerns.

QUESTION: Did the Secretary meet with the President when he was in Beijing?

MS. PSAKI: He did.

QUESTION: He did?

MS. PSAKI: He did. So the Secretary has met previously with the President as well.

QUESTION: So they've already gotten to know each other?

MS. PSAKI: They have already begun their relationship in these -- in the Secretary's position.

QUESTION: May I just follow, California trip, please?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: There have been so many talks in the think tanks and also CEOs meeting President in the White House and coming here and all. My question is that ⁽¹⁾, how serious is this issue been going on for a long time as far as -- I've been asking also for the last 10 years, maybe -- as far as --

MS. PSAKI: Ten years of asking?

QUESTION: Yeah.

MS. PSAKI: That's exhausting. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: The China – Chinese --

QUESTION: Never gotten an answer. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Yeah. (Laughter.)

MS. PSAKI: I know. This is a lot of pressure, Goyal.

QUESTION: There was a number of issues I've been asking for the last 10 years. Some came true and some still hanging around. One is now the Chinese – I mean, so-called, what they said – stealing their U.S. secrets. What my question is: How serious the Department is taking this? And second, since U.S. has Fortune 500 companies in China producing almost everything there, how do they protect their secrets there? Are they a problem there, or what is the problem going on there?

MS. PSAKI: Well, maybe I can address your question today. We'll see. I'll ask you afterwards.

Cyber security is one of the Administration's top priorities. It will certainly be on the agenda for this trip as the White House has previewed. We have long said that we are concerned about cyber intrusions emanating from China, from the President on down. This is an issue that has repeatedly been raised, and we believe at this critical time, of course, that the United States will do all it must to protect our national networks, critical infrastructure, and our valuable public and private property.

So we'll see. They'll be discussing that over the next couple of days, and I'm sure that my colleagues at the White House will read that out for the folks covering.

QUESTION: So are you concerned – you say you're concerned about cyber intrusions emanating from China. Are you concerned about cyber intrusions emanating from the United States?

MS. PSAKI: Matt, of --

QUESTION: Does the United States – is the United States Government concerned about its own intrusions into cyber space?

MS. PSAKI: Are you talking about our own – I'm not sure I'm totally following your question.

QUESTION: I'm just wondering if there's any consistency in the Administration's position here, whereas, as the President just acknowledged, there are intrusions or monitoring going on --

emanating from the United States on non-U.S. people. And you just said that you are concerned about cyber intrusions coming from China.

MS. PSAKI: Well, I believe the President spoke to this.

QUESTION: So it's okay for you guys to do it, but it's not okay for the Chinese to do it. Is that right?

MS. PSAKI: Matt, I believe the President spoke pretty extensively to this in his remarks.

QUESTION: Exactly. Yes, he did.

MS. PSAKI: He did. I would point you to that. I was answering Goyal's specific question about cyber security from China, which is what I was addressing.

QUESTION: Right. Exactly. But I'm – but I just want to make sure I understand this.

MS. PSAKI: I just don't have anything --

QUESTION: It's okay when you guys do it, but it's not okay when the Chinese do it. Is that the Administration's position?

MS. PSAKI: Matt, I'm not going to mix apples and oranges here on this issue.

QUESTION: I'm not sure I understand why it's apples and oranges, but okay.

MS. PSAKI: Okay.

QUESTION: Let me go back to my question as well. Two points also I have: One, a number of Chinese nationals were arrested for spying or stealing U.S. trade secrets and defense related other issues. And how seriously that going on in the – between U.S. and China as far as these intruders – intrusion going on by these individuals working for the U.S. Government or in private sectors?

MS. PSAKI: I just don't have anything more to add for you. Hopefully my first answer gave you a little something to bite into.

QUESTION: Thank you. Getting back to China and cyber security.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: I know that Mr. Kerry is part of the White House delegation, but from State's perspective, is there any specific good outcome or outcome that you are looking for?

MS. PSAKI: Well, again, these meetings this upcoming weekend will be – this will be at the top of the agenda, one of the important agenda items, as the White House has discussed in advance of the meetings. The Secretary announced in April that we'll also be continuing to talk about this

at July at the S&ED – during the S&ED conversations. So I expect that will be part of the next step in the process. But the plan is to continue to discuss and coordinate, and that is a positive step forward.

June 5, 2013

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on China

Washington, DC

QUESTION: When China's Commerce Ministry stated in a public announcement that they were going to join the TPP, was that a surprise to United States? Have you spoken with them about this issue? And how do you assess the seriousness of their announcement?

MS. PSAKI: Well, again, no country announces they're a part of a trade agreement. This is a case where the TPP – one – well, let me say first that USTR, of course, has the lead on this. It's not something that one gets invited to, the TPP that is, but rather something that one aspires to with a very high standard that is required that any country meets. And beyond that, in terms of their posting on their website, I'm not sure there was any heads-up on that, but it doesn't signify membership, but it signifies, I think, their interest. And other than that, I'd refer you to USTR.

QUESTION: Is this something that the United States welcomes, their interest?

MS. PSAKI: Again, I would refer you to USTR. This is a case where they have to meet high standards in order to become a part of TPP and a part of the trade agreement, and I would refer you to them on what those standards are.

QUESTION: Do you think it's going to come up in the summit meeting in California between the presidents?

MS. PSAKI: Well, White House has outlined what their main topics of focus are there. I'm happy to reiterate those if helpful. And of course, the expectation is there would be a broad range in conversation. Whether or not this will be raised from the Chinese side, I would send you to them.

June 3, 2013

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on China

Washington, DC

QUESTION: New topic, China. From a State Department perspective, what are the goals for the upcoming summit later this week from President Obama and President Xi Jinping?

MS. PSAKI: Well, let me first say that the White House and my old colleagues there have read – have previewed this quite extensively, so I would point you to their comments to lay out the specific agenda. The Secretary, of course, will be participating with the President. He'll be traveling out to California with him. There are a number of topics that they have talked about as being on the agenda, not limited to but of course cyber security, human rights, a continued economic dialogue, and I'm sure those and many others will be part of the discussion.

QUESTION: With regard to the cyber-attacks, how do you make it clear that there will be real consequences to China in the future for --

MS. PSAKI: Go ahead. Start again.

QUESTION: How do you make it clear there will be real consequences for China's actions?

MS. PSAKI: Well, cyber security is one of the Administration's top priorities. The Pentagon report reiterates what has long been said, that we're concerned about cyber intrusions emanating from China. The Secretary, the President, the Secretary – Secretary Hagel have made no secret about their concerns. Neither has NSA Director Tom Donilon, who recently said that from the President on down, this has become a key point of concern and discussion with China at all levels of our government and it will continue to be. The United States will do all it must to protect our national networks, critical infrastructure, and our valuable public and private sector property.

And last thing I would say is I know there are reports this weekend about a dialogue between China and the U.S. on this. This is something that the Secretary actually talked about back during trip in April. They'll continue that discussion, as the White House has previewed, later this week. And I expect it to be a big topic of conversation at the S&ED in July.

QUESTION: Any reaction real quick to Chairman Rogers' statement that he put out last night, saying China needs to see real consequences to their actions?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I would just reiterate our broad concern from the President on down about cyber security and the fact that it will be at the top of an extensive agenda next – this week and later this summer.

May 30, 2013

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on China

Washington, DC

QUESTION: Do you have anything on the lifting of the house arrest of a high-profile Chinese activist – I mean, Chinese rights lawyer Zheng Enchong? Apparently he met with a U.S. diplomat on May 23rd.

MS. PSAKI: So we regularly meet with individuals in every country where we work, including China, and we continue to urge China to uphold the rule of law and to abide by their commitment to protect individual human rights. I can't speak to the intentions of this specific meeting and would refer you to the Chinese Government for any more detail.

QUESTION: Is that paving the way for next week's meeting between Obama and Xi Jinping?

MS. PSAKI: I wouldn't draw that conclusion. Again, I think it's important to note that in China, just like many countries, we frequently meet with individuals, and my understanding is that was just a natural part of this process.

QUESTION: Is his release related to the meeting with a U.S. diplomat or there's – it's something else?

MS. PSAKI: Not that I'm aware of.

QUESTION: Do you think Chinese – is there more indication that China is making good gesture to release more dissidents before the meeting between U.S.-China leaders summit next week?

MS. PSAKI: Well, we certainly encourage China to continue to release dissidents, but I don't have any means or I'm not going to venture to evaluate or give a grade to that from here.

May 28, 2013

Patrick Ventrell, Acting Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on China
Washington, DC

QUESTION: President Obama in two weeks meets with his Chinese counterpart, and we've got a story out today about Chinese alleged hacking of our infrastructure. We're hearing that there are diplomatic overtures and all kinds of overtures with the Chinese to try and resolve this. What is the State Department contributing to that?

MR. VENTRELL: Just to say on – first of all, you know that National Security Advisor Tom Donilon is in China, and so I refer you to the White House for the details of his visit. You know that cyber security is one of the Administration's top priorities, and we have both the U.S. and China as two of the world's largest cyber actors and it's important that we continue a sustained, meaningful dialogue and work together. And as Secretary Kerry announced back in April, we have agreed to establish a Cyber Security Working Group with China in order to raise our concerns and have a constructive dialogue. So we look forward to engaging in that discussion. It's something we raise at every opportunity with our interlocutors in the Chinese Government. We do so via the State Department as through diplomacy and we'll continue to raise these issues.

QUESTION: Is there anything the President will be able to take from this building to his talks with his Chinese counterpart?

MR. VENTRELL: Again, I'm not going to get into any details of the President's upcoming travel. I really refer you to the White House. But we do, as I said last week, support the efforts of presidential travel and do some of the spade work. But in this instance, you have the National Security Advisor himself who's traveled directly over to China to have some of the talks in advance of the President's travel. So that really was White House --

QUESTION: Patrick, a working group on cyber security, that may sound like a good idea, but when the – when your partner in the working group is the one that's actually doing it, doing the hacking, don't you see that as a bit problematic? I think it's analogous to you making nice with the Russians about Syria and then --

MR. VENTRELL: We've been clear, Matt, about our concerns. It's something that – and our growing concerns. And so it's something that we raise very directly with the Chinese and we're going to do so through diplomatic channels and be very consistent about it.

QUESTION: Regarding the U.S.-China Cyber Space Working Group, I'd like to know if you have started on it or when you will start.

MR. VENTRELL: I'll have to take a look at it. My understanding is it's part of the Strategic & Economic Dialogue and so it's one of the sub working groups there managed by us.

May 23, 2013

Patrick Ventrell, Acting Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on China
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Patrick, is Secretary Kerry going to Sunnylands with the President to meet the Chinese President?

MR. VENTRELL: I think this was asked yesterday. I don't have anything to announce on the Secretary's schedule, if he'll be able to join the President. He, of course, tries to travel with the President when he has important meetings with foreign leaders, but again, I'm not sure if his schedule – if that's been all figured out for that particular week.

QUESTION: On North Korea, can you talk about when are you going to talk with your Chinese counterpart and at what level?

MR. VENTRELL: I mean, we talk to the Chinese constantly about North Korea. We do so with Glyn Davies and his counterpart. We do so at the Embassy.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) for the North Korea's envoy's trip to China?

MR. VENTRELL: Again, I'm not sure if that's going to be at the Embassy level or what channel. But we will check in with the Chinese, as we do very frequently on the DPRK account.

May 22, 2013

Patrick Ventrell, Acting Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on China
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Right. Chinese President Xi is going to meet with President Obama early June. I wonder if you have anything on that. Is there any interagency consultation between State Department and White House on the agendas to be discussed?

MR. VENTRELL: Well, this is a White House visit, and I really refer you to the White House for any details. We, of course, at the State Department assist our White House colleagues as necessary on any bilateral visits, but this is a White House-led show, obviously, because it's a meeting at the presidential level.

QUESTION: Do you know, would be Assistant Secretary of the State Daniel Russell will attend that meeting?

MR. VENTRELL: Well, he's been nominated but hasn't gone through his confirmation process, so that's where he is in that stage of the process.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) priority agenda from State Department? For example, if human rights or international religions freedoms such --

MR. VENTRELL: I really refer you to the White House for all aspects of the visit.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) for this bilat? Chinese?

MR. VENTRELL: The White House announced that it was in California yesterday, yes.

QUESTION: Yeah. But would Secretary be also be traveling --

MR. VENTRELL: Oh, will Secretary Kerry travel along. I don't have anything on the Secretary's schedule for that particular week yet, but we'll keep you updated as we get closer.

May 9, 2013

Patrick Ventrell, Acting Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on China
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Patrick, the Dalai Lama was at the University of Maryland, and the spiritual leader, of course, from Tibet, and also his Prime Minister was speaking yesterday at the Council on Foreign Relations. What both are saying – what I’m asking you is if the U.S. supports their claim and their request that Tibetans should get autonomy within **China**’s constitution. And that will protect you – U.S. policy – One-China policy.

MR. VENTRELL: Goyal, this is something we’ve talked about from this podium many times. Our lines and our policy have not changed. But we continue to call on the Chinese Government to permit Tibetans to express grievances freely, publicly, peacefully and without fear of retribution. And we’ve also urged the Chinese Government – and this goes back some time – to refrain from statements that denigrate the Dalai Lama and Tibet’s unique cultural, linguistic, and religious traditions.

QUESTION: What – just quick – just follow one more. What they are saying is that Chinese are now destroying the Tibetan culture and also sending more Chinese into Tibet, so Tibetan culture and future of Tibetans will be destroyed. That’s why now there is no freedom of any kind, religious and press and no freedom there in the Tibetan territory. That’s what they are requesting the U.S. Administration now that time has come through the United Nations or international community and U.S. can lead for their plea and plight going on for the last 50 years.

MR. VENTRELL: Well, I just answered the question about our concerns about Tibet’s unique cultural, linguistic, and religious traditions.

QUESTION: Chinese communist party’s (inaudible) newspaper People’s Daily is claiming that territorial jurisdiction of Okinawa is not resolved as of now. Could you clarify your position about that of who’s – who has the sovereignty of Okinawa?

MR. VENTRELL: The United States recognizes Japanese sovereignty over Okinawa. On the issue of the Senkakus, the United States does not take a position on the underlying question of the ultimate sovereignty of the Senkaku islands.

QUESTION: Do you consider this Chinese protest as unilateral provocative action?

MR. VENTRELL: You've asked this question a number of times about which part is provocative on each side, and I've answered this question many times, and there's no change in position.

QUESTION: Yeah. I'm just wondering if you have anything on the kind of miniature invasion of India that the Chinese army did. I believe it was last week. I apologize if I missed it. I hadn't checked the transcripts before I came over here.

MR. VENTRELL: This is something we talked about in terms of – and had referred you all to China and India on this issue. It's something we've talked about previously.

QUESTION: Regarding the Chinese role in the Middle East peace process, one of the top officials are calling the resumption of the peace talk and then saying that China wants to be broker to bring both sides together. Meanwhile, I understand Secretary Kerry will return to Middle East later this month. I wonder what do you make out of the significance of the Chinese role?

MR. VENTRELL: And we talked about this a little bit either yesterday or the day before, but we welcome – and I'll say it again – we welcome broad international support for the objective of Middle East peace based on the two-state goal. So we look forward to consulting with a broad range of partners on this issue, and you know the Secretary's personal commitment to the issue, as you mentioned, in terms of his continuing engagement.

QUESTION: Have you heard from your Chinese counterparts that – to see if there is any indication of the resumption of the peace talk process carry on?

MR. VENTRELL: I'm not sure if we've had a specific readout from the Chinese about their meetings with some of the Middle East leaders. But if I have any reaction for you, we'll get back to you.

QUESTION: Do you have any comment about the reports from Chen Guangcheng's brother that he was beaten up by local officials in his village?

MR. VENTRELL: We remain deeply concerned by reports that family members of Chen Guangcheng continue to be harassed and by reports that Chen Guangfu – this is his brother – was recently attacked and beaten. We urge Chinese authorities to stop any harassment of the family and to treat family members fairly and with dignity. We also remain deeply concerned by the reports of Chen Kegui's abuse in prison, and you know that's a case that we've raised consistently at very high levels.

QUESTION: Do you think there's a pattern emerging about the abuse that his family, Chen Guangcheng's family members, face in China and him being outspoken while he's in the U.S.?

Because apparently, he just announced or there's reports that's he's going to go to Taiwan and that these might be linked.

MR. VENTRELL: Right. I saw those news reports about the linkage. I don't have information one way or another. But we're very concerned about the treatment of his family members, and we will consistently and continue to raise them with the Chinese Government.

QUESTION: Given China's track record with his family, do you have any reason to believe that they will stop harassing Chen Guangcheng's family at this point?

MR. VENTRELL: We're going to continue to make our position very clear on this issue.

QUESTION: Forgive me if I missed it. Did the Secretary ever get through to Foreign Minister Wang Yi on this case?

MR. VENTRELL: The Secretary has conveyed in writing his concerns directly to senior Chinese officials.

QUESTION: The phone call didn't go?

MR. VENTRELL: He conveyed his concerns in writing.

QUESTION: It seems to be that the United States Government has become the last resort for a lot of Chinese petitions, for example, (inaudible) a White House petition, We the People, the website. And then my understanding is if you got 100,000 signatures within 30 days, the White House will respond to the petitions. I wonder if there is a similar channel within the State Department.

MR. VENTRELL: I'd refer you to the White House in terms of their petitions. We do have a way for people to share their public reactions with the State Department, both Americans and foreign citizens, especially at our embassies. But I'd have to look into more information about the specific petition and refer you to the White House on the matter concerning the White House.

May 3, 2013

Patrick Ventrell, Acting Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on China
Washington, DC

QUESTION: You suggested during the briefing yesterday – or you said that you believed that the Secretary was going to call the Chinese leadership to raise the case of Chen Guangcheng’s nephew.

MR. VENTRELL: Chen Kegui.

QUESTION: Chen Kegui. Thank you again. Did he make such a call? And if so, to whom and when, and what did he say?

MR. VENTRELL: The Secretary did reach out to his counterpart, Foreign Minister Wang, yesterday. He was unable to reach him and the Secretary will follow up. So he has placed a call and has not yet been able to connect with the Foreign Minister, who we understand is on travel.

QUESTION: Do you know if he attempted to reach him after you announced from the podium that he was going to call?

MR. VENTRELL: No, we discussed in the morning that he was going to make the call during the day.

QUESTION: Well – right, I know. But was it – did he try to do it after you had said that he was going to?

MR. VENTRELL: Matt, I don’t know at exactly what hour the --

QUESTION: I’m just curious if you think that the Chinese Foreign Minister might have been ducking the phone call because he knew that he was going to get yelled at about this.

MR. VENTRELL: I don’t know at what time the Operations Center was putting forward the call, but the Secretary did reach out to the Chinese and will follow up.

QUESTION: Isn’t it odd that he’s not able to reach the Chinese Foreign Minister?

MR. VENTRELL: I mean, again, sometimes it’s time differences or travel or – but sometimes it takes us a little while to connect with a foreign leader, or a foreign minister in this case.

May 2, 2013

Patrick Ventrell, Acting Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on China
Washington, DC

QUESTION: It's the case of Mr. Chen Kegui, although I fear I --

MR. VENTRELL: Chen Kegui.

QUESTION: Yeah, Kegui. Thank you. So it is -- according to human rights groups, it's six days since he was diagnosed with appendicitis, and a prison doctor has himself described it as serious. Yet he appears not to have been given -- to have had surgery for this. And I believe his father was barred from visiting him. Do you have any update on his condition? Are you pressing the Chinese to treat him better? Are you getting -- making any headway in that?

MR. VENTRELL: Thanks for the question, Arshad. And we talked about this a little bit earlier in the week, but I will reiterate that we remain deeply concerned by reports of Chen Kegui's mistreatment in prison and of his acute medical condition. And we have consistently raised Chen Kegui's case with the Chinese Government.

And just to say that when I spoke to the Secretary this morning, he again expressed his concern with the case. You know when he was on the Hill he testified about having raised the case with the Chinese, and he intends to do so directly again with the Chinese leadership. So the Secretary remains concerned. The U.S. Government remains concerned. We've consistently raised the case, and will continue to do so at the highest levels.

QUESTION: How is he going to do that? Is he -- well, the highest levels means the President, so are you suggesting the President, then?

MR. VENTRELL: I'm not suggesting that one way or another, who the Secretary is going to reach out to, but he intends to reach out to the Chinese.

QUESTION: And is he going to do it by phone or letter or the next time he sees them?

MR. VENTRELL: I believe he's going to do it by phone.

QUESTION: Sorry, can I --

QUESTION: Can you let us know if that happens, like today or sometime soon?

MR. VENTRELL: I'd be happy to.

QUESTION: You said that you were speaking to the Secretary about this case this morning?

MR. VENTRELL: The Secretary was made aware of this case and some of the developments this morning, and again expressed his concern about it and his intention to continue to raise the case.

May 1, 2013

Patrick Ventrell, Acting Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on China
Washington, DC

QUESTION: I have a couple questions on China and Japan.

MR. VENTRELL: Yeah.

QUESTION: I know your longstanding policy on Diaoyu Islands or Senkaku Islands, and both the State Department and DOD have said that the United States opposes any unilateral and coercive actions that seeks to undermine Japan's administrative control of the island. However, yesterday the Chinese ambassador to the U.S., Cui Tiankai, said it's Japan, not China, that is taking unilateral or coercive actions on the island issue. So in your view, who is taking unilateral and coercive actions here?

MR. VENTRELL: Well, the point is we urge all parties to avoid actions that could raise tensions or result in miscalculations that would undermine peace, security, and economic growth in this vital part of the world. So we say that to both sides.

QUESTION: Okay. And he also said that China hopes that other parties do not lift up rocks for the Japanese. And China hope even more that these rocks don't end up falling on their own feet. So this – apparently it's referring to the United States support for Japan. So are you afraid that the U.S. involvement in this dispute would hurt your own interests?

MR. VENTRELL: Well, we don't take a position on the ultimate sovereignty of the islands, and we call on all parties to manage their differences through peaceful means. And that's our longstanding policy; it has not changed.

QUESTION: Then will you try to talk with Chinese to discuss this issue to ease Chinese concern?

MR. VENTRELL: We regularly discuss regional security issues, such as tensions over the islands, with all the parties.

QUESTION: Patrick, do you know – you say that you don't want either side to do – you call on both sides not to engage in unilateral actions. Have you seen any unilateral actions by either side?

MR. VENTRELL: That – well, I didn’t say “unilateral.” I said, “We urge all parties to avoid actions that could raise tensions.”

QUESTION: Okay. Have you seen any actions that could raise tensions?

MR. VENTRELL: I mean, I don’t know if we parse each individual – I mean, there’s been some back and forth over the recent weeks, but --

QUESTION: But have you – well, there – clearly, there have been actions that have been taken by one or the other parties that have raised tensions. Is that not correct?

MR. VENTRELL: Right. There have been, and --

QUESTION: There have been. Okay.

MR. VENTRELL: -- we call --

QUESTION: And which – and who, the Chinese or the Japanese, has taken those, or have both of them?

MR. VENTRELL: My understanding is from the perception of both sides, they have concerns about actions the other side has taken.

QUESTION: No, no. How about – (laughter) – how about from your perception? From the U.S. – where the U.S. sits right now as watching this situation, which side has taken the provocative actions, or have they both?

MR. VENTRELL: We express our concern about any and all actions that could raise tensions, and we make that clear to both sides.

QUESTION: Okay. But have you seen both sides take provocative actions?

MR. VENTRELL: Like I said, the perception of both sides is that the other side has done something, and we make it clear to both sides.

QUESTION: I’m glad that you’re finally talking about speaking for other governments and their perceptions, but I want to know about the perception of the U.S. Government. Do you not have anything on that?

MR. VENTRELL: We’re not going to make a judgment one way or another --

QUESTION: All right.

MR. VENTRELL: -- about either side.

QUESTION: Do you have any update on the U.S. stand or policy on the ongoing tension between India and China, where India accuses China of penetration across the border?

MR. VENTRELL: I don't have anything beyond what I said last week, is that we support India and China working together to settle their boundary disputes, and to do so bilaterally and peacefully.

April 30, 2013

Patrick Ventrell, Acting Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on China
Washington, DC

MR. VENTRELL: Okay.

QUESTION: Yesterday, Japanese Defense Minister was at the Pentagon with the Secretary Hagel. And what he said was concern to the Japanese, that Chinese aggression or Chinese military buildup in the islands, especially in South Asia Sea. And also as far as China and India is concerned, they're also building up a military on the Indian border. Do you know these issues came up when the Secretary met with the Chinese leaders?

MR. VENTRELL: I'm not sure if they came up specifically point-by-point, but I've said here from this podium whether it's on China and India or China and Japan, that we encourage diplomacy and cooperation so that they can have their relations on track. But I don't have anything specific about the readout.

QUESTION: Yeah. Last week, you expressed concern over the violence in Xinjiang, and then was condemned or criticized by the Chinese Foreign Minister as U.S. having a double standard against China defined incidents as a terror attack. I don't know if you want to respond to that.

MR. VENTRELL: I mean, we talked about this a little bit last week and I don't have an update other than to say that we regret the unfortunate acts of violence and we urge the Chinese authorities to conduct a thorough, transparent investigation of the incident, and to provide those detained with due process. So that's our position and it hasn't changed from last week.

QUESTION: And also last week a Congressional subcommittee adopted a resolution regarding the United States policy toward Taiwan, a.k.a. H.R. 419, the Taiwan Policy Act of 2013, in which a lot of language had to do with the State Department. For example, support Taiwan's international (inaudible) and also request the State Department to revise the guidelines regarding contact with Taiwan. Do you have any response on that?

MR. VENTRELL: While we can't comment on pending legislation, there's no change to our "One China" policy which is based on the three joint communiques in the Taiwan Relations Act. In terms of the contact, on that issue we periodically review our Taiwan contact guidelines and update these as appropriate. But I don't have a specific reaction to pending Congressional legislation.

QUESTION: Or you won't comment. You can if you want to. You comment a lot on --

MR. VENTRELL: We do not comment on this type of pending legislation.

QUESTION: You do when you want to.

MR. VENTRELL: I don't have a comment for you on this specific --

QUESTION: When everyone talks about your funding, you like to comment on draft legislation.

MR. VENTRELL: I do not have a comment for you on this specific pending legislation.

QUESTION: Okay. Thank you.

QUESTION: Do you have a comment on the nephew of Chen Guangchen who -- apparently his medical parole for appendicitis was denied?

MR. VENTRELL: I do. First of all to say that promoting greater respect for human rights is among our top foreign policy objectives, including with China. We remain deeply concerned by reports of Chen Kegui's mistreatment in prison, and of his acute medical condition. We have consistently raised his case with the Chinese Government. We call on the Chinese authorities to treat him according to China's international commitments to protect universal human rights and make sure he receives proper medical treatment. We also remained deeply concerned by credible reports that local authorities continue to harass Chen Kegui's family members in his home village. So we urge the Chinese authorities to stop harassment of his family and to treat them fairly and with dignity.

And I do want to remind people that both Secretary Kerry and Deputy Secretary Burns raised his case with Chinese leaders in Beijing this month. Secretary Kerry reiterated that in his Congressional testimony. And the U.S. Embassy and officials in Washington, we've reiterated our concerns with the Chinese Government and called for Chen Kegui to be given immediate medical attention. And Ambassador Locke underscored again our position with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs just today.

QUESTION: Given that the non-persecution of his family was one of the conditions when you made that agreement last year that brought Chen to the United States, do you feel that you've been duped by the Chinese in that you guys thought you had this big success and now they're going and allowing local authorities to harass the family? Well, worse than harass -- persecute.

MR. VENTRELL: I'm not going to get into our diplomatic back and forth with the Chinese over the arrival of Chen Guangcheng here to the United States. What I will say is, we've been very clear in our concerns, we're raising them very vocally. We're doing it here publicly and also privately. And so our concerns are very clear have been expressed to the Chinese Government.

QUESTION: Well, what would be -- since this was an actual agreement that you guys made, what would be the consequences if this continued mistreatment persists?

MR. VENTRELL: Again, I'm not going to get into the details of the negotiation, but I will say that we're deeply concerned by this.

QUESTION: But there's no potential consequences.

MR. VENTRELL: Look, this is – we're raising this directly with the Chinese Government in a very clear way. I'm not going to get into the substance of that diplomacy other than to tell you all that it is a priority to us.

QUESTION: Congressman Frank Wolf and Congressman Smith once criticized State Department not having enough official diplomats in Beijing Embassy to manage human rights issues, because most of people are doing trade, business, energy. I wonder how would you like to respond to --

MR. VENTRELL: Yeah. I'm not particular with their exact complaint, but we have a very large, bilateral mission in China, a number of consulates. And we have officers who work very diligently on human rights, and we raise it at every opportunity with the Chinese Government, and we have officers who their full-time job is to follow the human rights situation. So it's something that we do.

April 24, 2013

Patrick Ventrell, Acting Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on China
Washington, DC

MR. VENTRELL: I have one thing for you at the top before turning it over to all of you. I'd once again like to start off with today's Free the Press case. Memetjan Abdulla worked as an editor of the state-run China National Radio's Uighur Service. He was detained in July 2009 for allegedly instigating ethnic rioting in the Xinjiang Uighur autonomous region via posts on the Uighur-language website Salkin. On April 1st, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. The exact charges against Abdullah were not disclosed, but Radio Free Asia reported on the sentence and cited a witness at the trial that stated that Abdullah was targeted for talking to international journalists in Beijing about the riots as well as translating articles on the website. We call on the Government of China to release Memetjan Abdulla and all other journalists imprisoned for their work.

QUESTION: Since you brought it up --

MR. VENTRELL: Yeah.

QUESTION: -- there were some deaths in that province.

MR. VENTRELL: Yeah.

QUESTION: Do you have any reaction to it? And do you agree with the Chinese position that this was terrorism, or do you think this -- these were merely protestors who were then unfairly targeted?

MR. VENTRELL: Well, Brad, we are deeply concerned by the reports of violent confrontation in Xinjiang that left 21 people dead. We will continue to monitor the situation carefully. We regret the unfortunate acts of violence that led to these casualties, and we'll continue to encourage Chinese officials to take steps to reduce tensions and promote long-term stability in Xinjiang. And we urge the Chinese authorities to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation of this incident, and to provide all Chinese citizens, including Uighurs, the due process protections to which they are entitled not only under China's constitutional laws but under their international human rights commitments as well.

QUESTION: Just on whether this was terrorism, as you -- as the Chinese claim, or were these just protestors who were -- I mean, where does the fault for this lie?

MR. VENTRELL: Well, we're seeking more information. We're certainly concerned by and following closely this violence, but what we're calling for is a thorough and credible

investigation so that more facts become available, so that the rest of the international community can hear more about what happened.

QUESTION: Can U.S. diplomats enter that area?

MR. VENTRELL: They can. Indeed, actually our Ambassador was in the western province of Xinjiang, is there right now leading a trade delegation of energy, rail, and transportation companies. So I'm not sure that he was near the actual violence, but that is a province or an area that we're at times able to visit and that the Ambassador has in the past and is right now.

QUESTION: His – the Ambassador's effort is just related to trade, or is he bringing up the situation with Uighurs, the human rights situation?

MR. VENTRELL: My understanding is that he's there with a trade delegation – U.S. energy, rail, and transportation executives. So – but Ambassador Locke regularly raises these cases, as well as we do from Washington, directly with the Chinese Government.

QUESTION: More broadly, the situation of Uighurs in China, Xinjiang specifically, I think it was addressing the human rights report --

MR. VENTRELL: It was.

QUESTION: -- a few days back, but do you see a deterioration or some sort of – what's your assessment of the situation with the Uighurs in China right now and their treatment?

MR. VENTRELL: Well, Shaun, we're deeply concerned by ongoing reports of discrimination against and restrictions on Uighurs and other Muslims in China. So we urge the Chinese Government to cease policies that seek to restrict the practice of religious beliefs across China. But we've been particularly concerned about the Uighurs and have stated so publicly in the past.

QUESTION: This just real quick. The wife of Liu Xia had a brief moment of fresh air today --

MR. VENTRELL: Yeah.

QUESTION: -- yelling out of a car window that she's not free. What do you make of this? And have you been raising this issue with the Chinese, about the treatment of his family?

MR. VENTRELL: We remain deeply concerned that Chinese authorities continue to hold Liu Xia, wife of Nobel Laureate and imprisoned activist Liu Xiaobo under unjustified and extra-legal house arrest. We've repeatedly raised our concerns about the imprisonment of Liu Xiaobo and the extra-legal house detention of his wife, actions which violate the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, which they deemed a violation of international law. So we continue to urge the Chinese authorities not only to release Mr. Xiaobo, but also to allow his wife out of house arrest. So, we think that should be done immediately and that he and his wife

should be provided the protections and freedoms to which they're entitled under China's constitution and legal system.

QUESTION: And this court case, do you believe that these are trumped up charges, the so-called real estate fraud, or do you respect the Chinese right to prosecute what they are calling possible fraud?

MR. VENTRELL: Well, we're monitoring the trial very closely and urge the Chinese authorities to afford her the due process protections to which – to which he is entitled under Chinese law and China's international human rights commitments.

April 23, 2013

Patrick Ventrell, Acting Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on China
Washington, DC

QUESTION: There was movement of Chinese ships near the disputed islands. It's characterized as one of the largest movements there. Meanwhile, you've had some developments also between Japan and the Republic of Korea regarding the issue of the Yasukuni Shrine. I guess to begin with, with these ships, is there anything the United States has to say about that? Have you – how have you assessed the situation? How serious does it seem?

MR. VENTRELL: I mean, you know our position on the Senkakus. We've said it here clearly many times that we do not take a position on the question of the ultimate sovereignty over the islands. We do urge all parties to avoid actions that could raise tensions or result in miscalculations that would undermine peace, security, and economic growth in that vital part of the world. So that's really our reaction and it's something we've said in the past.

QUESTION: Does it seem as if it's escalated at all with the current movement of the Chinese ships? Is there a sign that that message has been getting through?

MR. VENTRELL: I'm not sure that there's been any development overnight, but we do believe that good relations between Japan and China benefit everyone in the region. That's true also for Japan and South Korea, as I said yesterday.

QUESTION: Sure. Regarding the shrine visit --

MR. VENTRELL: Yeah.

QUESTION: -- I don't imagine you want to – I mean, that the U.S. has a position on that. But regarding the cancelation of the Foreign Minister's visit, the South Korean Foreign Minister, his cancelation, is that – these are two of the closest U.S. allies. Is that – are there concerns about what that says about the relationship between them?

MR. VENTRELL: I really addressed this yesterday and have the same thing to say today, which is that we encourage those two allies to work through their issues and have a good dialogue and a good relationship. But I don't have anything – a specific reaction to this canceled meeting one way or another.

MR. VENTRELL: The Chinese MFA Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Affairs Wu Dawei had a productive set of discussions on North Korea yesterday with a range of U.S. officials including Special Representative for North Korean Policy Glyn Davies, Special Envoy

for the Six-Party Talks Clifford Hart, and Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues Robert King, also Coordinator for Sanctions Policy Daniel Fried.

Today, later in the day, he's going to meet with Under Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Yun, and NSS Senior Director for Asia Danny Russel over at the White House. So his meetings continue today, but we said he's had a productive set of discussions so far.

QUESTION: And yesterday, Ambassador King mentioned that the U.S. would still be open to possibly providing food aid to the North. So I'm wondering what kind of conditions would have to be met for something like that to happen.

MR. VENTRELL: Well, first of all, Ambassador King was very clear on raising our human rights concerns with the DPRK and made some very clear and strong statements about that. But in terms of food aid, we've long said that we have no ill will toward the North Korean people, and first of all, we want the regime to make the decision to spend money on its people and better feed and take care of its own population. But on – if we were to have confidence that they would – the food aid would actually get to the people, that's something we're willing to consider. But the actions they've taken have not engendered or generated that kind of confidence in the near past.

QUESTION: Secretary Kerry said in Beijing that high-level discussions with Chinese, or the purpose of the discussion is to feel out exactly what steps they can take together to make sure that it's real closely that can be implemented. So by when does the United States want to agree with the Chinese on next steps?

MR. VENTRELL: Well, again, we're working with our Chinese counterparts. This meeting is part of an intensive dialog we're having among our experts about how we can get the North Koreans to not only change their position, but work toward a denuclearized North Korea and come in compliance with their obligations. So that's what we're working toward very intensively with the Chinese.

QUESTION: Yeah. U.S. food aid to North Korea is a humanitarian issue. How different humanitarian issue and North Korea threatened with nuclear weapons to United States, it's two different issues you handle that?

MR. VENTRELL: Well, we haven't tied the two in the past, but the concern has been the confidence we have in terms of their ability to comply with and deliver the food to people that they're supposed to.

April 15, 2013

Patrick Ventrell, Acting Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on China
Washington, DC

QUESTION: On Tibet, there's – four more Tibetans have been sentenced to six years of imprisonment because the allegation is that they were spreading the news about self-immolation, which normally – which anyone does, sending photos overseas about those self-immolations. Do you know anything about it? Do you have any concerns on this?

MR. VENTRELL: Well, we are very concerned by the self-immolations, detentions, arrests of family members and associates of those who have self-immolated, so we call on the Chinese Government to engage in substantive dialogue with the Dalai Lama, his reps, with his representatives, and without preconditions. So that's our longstanding policy. I'm not sure if there's a specific case that you're interested in here. I didn't hear the top of your question.

QUESTION: Thank you. And was the Tibetan issue raised by Secretary Kerry when he was in China?

MR. VENTRELL: I wasn't in the meeting, but human rights concerns broadly were raised, so --

QUESTION: Not on specific (inaudible) --

MR. VENTRELL: Again, the traveling party is en route back. I wasn't in those meetings, but human rights concerns were very much raised in the meetings.

April 12, 2013

Patrick Ventrell, Acting Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on China
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Besides North Korea, what are other topics on his agenda to talk with Chinese counterparts?

MR. VENTRELL: In terms of the whole trip?

QUESTION: In China.

MR. VENTRELL: We're providing -- in terms of China, well, it's a broad range of issues. And so we're providing some readout to the traveling press, but I don't have an update of the whole breadth of issues in terms of all the officials he'll meet with. But if I have something more for you later this afternoon, I'll get it to you.

QUESTION: To follow up --

QUESTION: Did he actually change his trip, the sequence? Because I --

MR. VENTRELL: Did he change his trip what?

QUESTION: I thought originally he was planning to go to China. China was his last stop before --

MR. VENTRELL: I'm not aware that there was any change of schedule one way or another.

In the back.

QUESTION: Yes. Regarding Secretary's trip to China, human rights organization is urging Secretary to make human rights as a top priority. I wonder if you have anything on that.

MR. VENTRELL: Just to say that human rights issues are a central element of the U.S.-China bilateral relationship and U.S. foreign policy, and so we continue to raise human rights frankly with the Chinese Government, and it very much will come up in the Secretary's discussion with his Chinese counterparts.

QUESTION: Do you have any personnel announcement regarding the assistant secretary of EAP? Because it was widely reported that now Secretary Kerry is ready to name Dan Russel as assistant secretary.

MR. VENTRELL: I don't have any update on personnel. Those announcements come from the White House.

QUESTION: Follow-up on China?

MR. VENTRELL: Okay.

QUESTION: Twenty-one senators have written a letter to Secretary Kerry to raise the issue of Tibet and the human rights violation in that part of the world, in view of the more than hundred Tibetans that have died in self-immolation. Will that be an issue when he goes and meets the Chinese leadership, besides the North Korean issue?

MR. VENTRELL: I'm not aware of the congressional letter in question, but human rights are something that certainly the Secretary will raise.

QUESTION: But would be an issue with --

MR. VENTRELL: Again, the traveling party is going to read out more details of who he's meeting with and the topics as we get there. I don't have any more information.

April 10, 2013

Patrick Ventrell, Acting Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on China
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Two more China-related issue. Have the U.S. Embassy in China released any advice on bird flu or food safety issue?

MR. VENTRELL: I'm not sure about the release of information in terms of any public messages that we may have released from Embassy Beijing. I'll have to check on that. I do know that China has notified the World Health Organization of, going back to March 31st, of the first cases and has now confirmed 28 cases. But this is something that the CDC is following very closely, and we post all of our public information both on the CDC website and on the U.S. Embassy Beijing website. So I'd have to check if there's been an update.

QUESTION: Finally, a human rights-related issue. Do you have anything regarding the blind Chinese activist Chen Guangcheng's call to release his exile document? And do you have any update on the status of his nephew?

MR. VENTRELL: Okay. So thank you for the question. Promoting greater respect for human rights is among our top foreign policy objectives, including with regard to China. We're deeply concerned by reports that prison officials abused Chen Kegui, the nephew of prominent human rights advocate Chen Guangcheng, during his ongoing imprisonment and that local authorities continue to harass his family members. So we urge the Chinese Government to treat all of its citizens, including Chen Kegui, fairly and with dignity. But in terms of any of our diplomatic conversations, we're – I'm not in a position to further characterize our diplomatic discussions, nor at the time, nor our current discussions.

QUESTION: But do you consider releasing the document of Chen's exile, I mean, back to last May the negotiation between U.S. and China?

MR. VENTRELL: We characterized that negotiation at the time, and our public characterization of it stands. We're not in a position to go beyond what we said previously.

QUESTION: Well, is there some kind of secret document that you're aware of?

MR. VENTRELL: Not that I'm aware of. I mean, certainly we have records of our diplomatic interactions, but --

QUESTION: No, no, no. But I mean something that would be – that maybe Secretary Clinton or Ambassador Locke or someone signed with the Chinese. Is there something in writing about the – which provides guarantees from the Chinese side about how his family would be treated? Or was it all done verbally?

MR. VENTRELL: I'm not sure on that question one way or another. We characterized publicly what we could about the negotiation at the time.

QUESTION: Well, he yesterday testified that there was such a – there is such a document out there. So if you could – I'm not suggesting, although I would like it if you would – if there is one, if you would release it, but I'm not asking for it to be released at the moment. I'd just like to know if there is one.

MR. VENTRELL: I'm not aware one way or another.

QUESTION: Well, can you ask?

MR. VENTRELL: I'd be happy to look into it, but I'm not aware one way or another.

March 28, 2013

Victoria Nuland, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on China
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Since we're in Asia --

MS. NULAND: Yes.

QUESTION: -- and you outlined some conversations that are going on with the Chinese and others, do you have any more clarification on this flare incident that occurred between China and Vietnam and the South China Sea?

MS. NULAND: You're talking about the Chinese --

QUESTION: The Chinese naval --

MS. NULAND: -- fishing vessel that appears --

QUESTION: No, Chinese --

MS. NULAND: -- vessel that appears to have fired on a --

QUESTION: Yeah.

MS. NULAND: Yeah.

QUESTION: But the question, I think, at the time, was whether it had actually fired on it or passed it, whether it had set it on fire or not.

MS. NULAND: We are concerned about these reports that there was an incident between a Chinese vessel and a Vietnamese fishing boat that resulted in the Vietnamese boat catching on fire. We are asking for clarification from both the Chinese side and the Vietnamese side. You know how strongly we oppose the threat or use of force or coercion by any claimant in the South China Sea.

QUESTION: Right.

MS. NULAND: And we are ensuring all parties to ensure maritime safety and to refrain from actions that undermine the prospect that these issues can be settled diplomatically.

QUESTION: And it's been a couple days now. Do you have any clarification on how that fishing vessel ended up on fire? I noticed you used a passive voice, "It resulted in a -- "

MS. NULAND: Suffice to say that there is a discrepancy in the tale told by the two sides.

QUESTION: Okay. And then I asked also – and this was more a principle question on Chinese naval exercises near Malaysia, and whether the U.S. has any problems with naval exercises in international waters, but in waters that one country claims as its exclusive economic zone.

MS. NULAND: Well, first, with regard to the Malaysian exercise, and then we'll go on to naval activity in EEZs, if that is all right, Brad.

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. NULAND: So we've seen these reports that the Chinese navy is conducting military operations near disputed islands in the South China Sea along the Malaysian coast. Until the region develops a common strategy for managing and preventing disputes, assertive actions by claimants could raise the risk of tensions, or the risk of conflict. So we urge claimants to take that into account when they plan their military operations in disputed and currently occupied – currently unoccupied land features, that this could cause contention, there could be unexpected consequences, there could, in fact, be conflict, and we urge all claimants to avoid taking provocative actions.

That said, under international law, all states enjoy the freedom of navigation and overflight as well as other internationally lawful uses of the sea related to those freedoms in the exclusive economic zone of a coastal state. And these activities do include military activity. So the concern is about the existing political tensions, exercises looking provocative or incidents being sparked unintentionally, but as a legal matter, the – I spoke to the actual legal situation in EEZs.

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. NULAND: Okay. Please.

MS. NULAND: Two different things. That was with regard to Vietnam. We're now talking about Chinese military exercises in --

QUESTION: Okay.

March 27, 2013

Patrick Ventrell, Acting Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on China
Washington, DC

QUESTION: You said yesterday you tried to get more information from both sides, Vietnam and China. Did you contact with Chinese – to both governments yesterday?

MR. VENTRELL: With the Chinese Government yesterday?

QUESTION: Yeah.

MR. VENTRELL: We have been in touch.

QUESTION: And so Chinese Government denied that they – they said they did not shoot against the Vietnamese vessels. How is your recognition of this case?

MR. VENTRELL: Like I said, we're discussing this with both sides. I don't have additional information for you.

QUESTION: I just have one more follow-up. Do you have any sense of whether this was in international waters?

MR. VENTRELL: I'm not sure about the location of it. That's why we're seeking additional information to get clarity.

QUESTION: Is this issue going to be discussed between Secretary Kerry and the Chinese counterpart in his trip?

MR. VENTRELL: I mean, this is a trip that's still a number of days away, so we're raising it through diplomatic channels.

QUESTION: On a related topic, do you have a comment on Chinese military exercises in – I think it's close to the Malaysian coast?

MR. VENTRELL: Other than to say, Brad, that we continue to carefully monitor China's military developments and encourage them to exhibit greater transparency, we want them to use their military capabilities in a manner conducive to the maintenance of peace and stability in the Asian Pacific region. But in terms of the specific exercise, I don't really have a specific comment about it today.

QUESTION: You don't have opposition in principle to China or anyone else conducting naval exercises in someone else's exclusive economic zone?

MR. VENTRELL: I mean, look, you know what our broad principles are on the South China Sea. You know where we are in terms of the ability to have free flow of commerce and for things to be resolved diplomatically, and that's really the most important thing.

QUESTION: On this, actually, I don't know. I don't – I mean, do you – is it a problem or not to – I don't know – to have – to do naval exercises in someone else's – not in their international – not in their national waters, but in their exclusive economic zone, the 200-mile area?

MR. VENTRELL: Right. I'd have to check into that, Brad. I'm not sure about the exclusive economic zone. You know what our broad principles are, but I'd have to check on that.

March 25, 2013

Patrick Ventrell, Acting Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on China
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Last Friday Tioria said the U.S. is completely relaxed on the Chinese prisoner's visit to Russia, and now he's visiting Africa, and this will further expand the Chinese cooperation with African countries. Does this raise your concern in terms of a closer Chinese and African tie?

MR. VENTRELL: This is something we talked about last summer when former Secretary Clinton traveled to Africa, and what we're working on with our African partners is a strong partnership on democracy, on development, on sustainable development, and so we have a really positive agenda for Africa ourselves and can't really speak for the Chinese. They'll continue to work with a wide number of different countries on their own interests, but we've got a positive agenda of our own.

QUESTION: What is your agenda?

MR. VENTRELL: Well, as I just described, we want partnerships with all of these countries, and we're looking to promote democracy and sustainable development and really a new way forward for some of these countries to lift themselves out of poverty and to treat disease, and these are sort of our main priorities in Africa.

QUESTION: Is the United States itself in competition with China in Africa?

MR. VENTRELL: I don't know if I'd phrase it that way. We're – our relationship is not necessarily defined by competition alone, but we may have divergent interests in various spheres of Africa, but we continue to promote our positive agenda.

March 22, 2013

Victoria Nuland, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on China
Washington, DC

QUESTION: I wondered if there was any reaction or perhaps disappointment today that the Chinese new leader, Xi Jinping, has made his first overseas visit to Russia as president, instead of perhaps to the United States.

MS. NULAND: We are completely relaxed, as you know. Xi Jinping was in the United States last year or I can't remember when it was. It was about four months ago, right? He was the guest of the Vice President, he had a chance to meet with the President. He was welcomed here in this building by then-Secretary Clinton. We got a chance to get to know him. He did a tour across the United States. So it's normal that he's going to visit his neighbors, obviously. So we are obviously relaxed about that.

MS. NULAND: We were privileged to get to know him before he was even named. And we expect that those relationships will continue to build and grow.

QUESTION: And did you have any concern about the nature of the remarks made by either of those two leaders which appeared to reflect a shared desire on their part to constrain American influence across the globe?

MS. NULAND: I didn't see the remarks by either of them. If you want to send me what you're concerned about, I'm happy to take a look.

QUESTION: Have you anything to say about reports that the Chinese halted oil shipments to North Korea for the month of February?

MS. NULAND: We've seen those reports. We would refer you to the Chinese Government. We are also seeking further information from them about decisions that they may or may not have made.

I think you know that we have been in very close consultation, including Secretary Kerry's conversations with both State Counselor Yang and his new counterpart in the foreign ministry on the issue of the D.P.R.K. That led to our successful work on now two Security Council resolutions over the last three months, increasing the pressure on the D.P.R.K. But we continue to talk about what more we can do to get the leadership's attention and encourage them to change course.

QUESTION: Is this the kind of step we have been urging the Chinese to take? This reported action?

MS. NULAND: Again, we're not in a position to confirm these reports. We'll send you to the Chinese.

QUESTION: Is this the kind of thing we've urged them to do?

MS. NULAND: Again, they need to make their own decisions how they can get the attention of the D.P.R.K. Government, and I'm not going to comment on something that I'm not in a position to confirm.

March 13, 2013

Victoria Nuland, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on China

Washington, DC

QUESTION: The President made some comments on China and cyber-espionage. Have you seen those comments in an interview he did? I was just going to ask if you think they help your diplomatic efforts, and how, if so.

MS. NULAND: We've seen the President's comments. We've also seen the speech by National Security Advisor Donilon. Obviously, this is a complex and difficult issue that we're working on with China, and we're going to continue to do it.

QUESTION: Are they still denying involvement? Are the Chinese still denying involvement?

MS. NULAND: I think you know that we have a regular dialogue with the Chinese on this, and we will continue to press the importance of coming to common cause with China on these issues along the lines that National Security Advisor Donilon outlined.

February 19, 2013

Victoria Nuland, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing

Washington, DC

Selections on China

QUESTION: What is the understanding of the United States Government about the role of the Chinese army in cyber attacks on this country and around the world?

MS. NULAND: I am assuming, James, that you're talking about the recent Mandiant Technologies reports. You know that we've been very clear here and from the White House that the United States has substantial and growing concerns about the threats to the United States economic and national security interests posed by cyber intrusions, including the threat of commercial information. The President spoke about this very directly in his State of the Union Address. We are working in an interagency way led by the White House to strengthen the defense of U.S. Government networks and to protect our critical infrastructure such as the issuance of the President's new executive order.

We're also trying to strengthen the ability of our private sector to defend against cyber intrusions by releasing more technical data to help them to understand what's going on and how they can protect themselves, and working to coordinate protection of intellectual property.

We've also regularly and repeatedly raised our concerns at the highest level with the Chinese Government about cyber theft, including with senior Chinese officials and the military. We'll continue to do that. It comes up in virtually every meeting we have with Chinese officials. And I think you know that we have also, in the context of the Strategic Security Dialogue that Deputy Secretary Burns runs with his Chinese counterpart, established a conversation on cyber security.

So we will continue to work on all of these things because it's a serious concern.

QUESTION: And what is the role of the government? What is our understanding of the role of the Chinese army – excuse me – about its role in these attacks? Do we understand the Chinese army to be engaged in these attacks against us?

MS. NULAND: I think I said that we've raised our concern at the highest level about cyber threats from China, including the involvement of the military. I'm not going to go any more than that because it'll take me into intelligence.

QUESTION: So if a foreign government's military is waging attacks on us, to a lay person that would seem to raise the question of whether or not we're at war in some sense. Are we at cyber war with China?

MS. NULAND: Again, we are talking about concerns. I'm not going to go beyond that because it's going to take me into intelligence, James. Yeah.

QUESTION: The Chinese foreign ministry said that this report was groundless and the defense ministry denied any involvement in hacking. What does that say about how they consider your concerns? It seems like they just blow it off.

MS. NULAND: Again, we do now have this --

QUESTION: Or you're wrong.

MS. NULAND: We do now have this dialogue on cyber that the State Department runs under our Strategic Security Dialogue. We also talk about this issue at every level, and we're obviously going to have to continue to do so.

QUESTION: If -- unless their public -- their private statements are completely different than their public statements, what is the quality of your dialogue if they say, "No, we're not involved with it in any way. Have a nice day"?

MS. NULAND: Well, it doesn't change the fact that we have to keep talking about it because we have concerns.

QUESTION: But do you get a different response than that in private? Do you get real engagement, or is it complete rejection of the claim against them?

MS. NULAND: Without getting too deeply into the details of private diplomatic discussions we're having, what we have been involved with is making clear that we consider this kind of activity a threat not only to our national security but also to our economic interests, and laying out our concerns specifically so that we can see if there's a path forward.

QUESTION: And do you feel that these dialogues have had any value so far in stemming the flow of -- or the tide of cyber attacks from China?

MS. NULAND: I think as recent public reports make clear, we're obviously going to have to keep working on this. It's a serious concern.

QUESTION: Does the fact that they own so much of our debt -- the Chinese -- have any impact on our ability to address these kinds of issues, these other issues?

MS. NULAND: We have to -- regardless of the macroeconomic situation, we have to continue to address our own national security and economic interests, and we will continue to do that.

QUESTION: Victoria, one more on this just -- or a couple more on this. You began, I think, by saying that you have substantial and growing concerns about this. Is it fair to say that the

problem is getting worse; in other words, it hasn't been constant, that you have been seeing it get worse?

MS. NULAND: I think I said growing, right?

QUESTION: Right, okay. Second, you said you had raised this at the highest levels. That means the President has raised it with the President of China, correct?

MS. NULAND: I'm going to let the White House speak to the President's conversations. I think I'll just leave it where I left it, Arshad.

QUESTION: But you said the highest levels, correct?

MS. NULAND: I did, I did.

QUESTION: Okay. And then lastly, I didn't quite understand when you – you said it twice, but you've raised it at the highest levels about your concerns about possible Chinese military involvement, correct? Have you raised it in those not very frequent but still occasional contacts that you have with the Chinese military?

MS. NULAND: I'm going to send you to the Department of Defense because they conduct that dialogue. But my expectation is that the answer will be yes.

QUESTION: One more on a separate China one?

MS. NULAND: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Philippines – there was a report about China rejecting Philippines request for international arbitration in the South China Sea. Are you disappointed with this, and does this kind of go against all the types of mediation efforts that you've been talking about previously?

MS. NULAND: Well, as you know, Brad, the United States supports the use of diplomatic and other peaceful means to manage and resolve these kinds of disagreements, including the use of arbitration or other international legal mechanisms. The Law of the Sea Convention contains procedures under which parties can seek third-party dispute settlement with regard to certain disputes involving the interpretation or application of the convention. We continue to encourage ASEAN and China at the same time to also make rapid progress on a meaningful code of conduct.

We don't believe that the pursuit of dispute settlement procedures set forth in the Law of the Sea Convention should preclude or hinder the code of conduct negotiations. So we see value to both.

February 15, 2013

Victoria Nuland, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing

Washington, DC

Selections on China

QUESTION: This week, the number of Tibetans who have died because of self-immolation has crossed the hundred mark. Is the Secretary aware about this? And when he spoke to his Chinese counterpart earlier this week on North Korea, did this issue come up?

MS. NULAND: I think I reported that in his first conversation with Foreign Minister Yang, obviously the importance of continuing our human rights dialogue did come up. The conversation – the second conversation was purely about the DPRK, as I understand it, or primarily about it.

But we do note the horrific figures that you mentioned, Lalit, and we remain deeply concerned by the reports that these immolations are continuing. We call on those who are immolating or those who might be considering this to think hard about whether it's the best way to express yourself. And we also, as we always do, call on the Chinese Government to address its own policies in Tibet that have caused these kinds of tension and frustration.

QUESTION: Do you see any move on the part of the Chinese to address the Tibetans concerns on this?

MS. NULAND: I think you can tell from the situation that it remains quite tense.

February 14, 2013

Victoria Nuland, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing

Washington, DC

Selections on China

QUESTION: Madam, it looks like that China is running away from the truth of what's happening in Tibet, and Tibetans are now more and more putting themselves on fire or self-immolations. And now the Chinese media is accusing the U.S.-based VOA, Voice of America, and what they are saying is that American Government – supported by the U.S. Government, the VOA is behind all those what they are alleging that self-immolation by the Tibetans. Any comments on that? Because VOA, they have denied any allegations of the – by the Chinese Government.

MS. NULAND: Well, that's what I was going to say, that VOA put out a very strong statement denying any involvement. I'll refer you to Scott in the back of the room.

QUESTION: Well, since the Secretary of State is the de facto or the ex – I don't know what it's called – the figurehead of the BBG --

MS. NULAND: Of the Broadcast Board of Governors.

QUESTION: Yes. Do you not have a – do you not have any additional comment from what VOA said? I mean, they can deny it all they want, but it seems like a rather scandalous thing to say to suggest that VOA is responsible for people setting themselves on fire.

MS. NULAND: Well, obviously VOA has made clear that they were not involved, and we support VOA in that statement.

QUESTION: But do you know if this was – this subject has been raised with the Chinese at an official level? I mean, this is a – I mean, this is --

MS. NULAND: I expect that it will be.

QUESTION: Madam, can I just follow quickly? As far as your problem in Tibet is concerned, if U.S. has any roadmap for the Tibetan people as far as their – for their human rights and for their religious rights and freedom of the press in Tibet, like talking to India, U.S., and the Chinese. Any kind of – are you planning, or there should be now Dalai Lama is calling on the U.S. to help his people.

MS. NULAND: Well, as you know, Goyal, in almost every encounter we have at a senior level with Chinese officials we raise our concerns about human rights in general, about Tibet

specifically, and we urge the Chinese Government to engage in a substantive dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representative without preconditions as a means of addressing the grievances that the people of Tibet have and to relieve tensions. And we continue to call on Chinese Government officials to permit Tibetans to express their grievances freely, publicly, and peacefully, without fear of retribution.

QUESTION: Please, could you speak specifically to the recent arrest of 70 Tibetans by Chinese authorities?

MS. NULAND: I didn't actually have information about a new round-up of Tibetans. I will look into that, obviously, but we are deeply concerned about the overall deteriorating human rights situation in Tibetan areas, including not only the tragic self-immolations, but also that criminal laws have been used to deal with people who have associated with those people.

QUESTION: Do you think the Tibetans' self-immolation are results of foreign causes, or --

MS. NULAND: Are the result of?

QUESTION: Foreign forces, or foreign -- caused by foreign media or foreign causes, or it's a result of Chinese policy which the State Department has been calling the Chinese Government to review? Thank you.

MS. NULAND: I mean, obviously we can't speak for the individuals who have taken these actions, but our concern is that there are deep grievances within the Tibetan population which are not being addressed openly and through dialogue by the Chinese Government.

QUESTION: Did the issue came up when Secretary Kerry spoke to his Chinese counterpart yesterday?

MS. NULAND: General issues of working well together across the spectrum, including in the human rights sphere, came up. I don't have any more detail for you. As I said yesterday, there will be -- these were introductory calls. There will be plenty of time to go through the whole agenda.

QUESTION: Sorry. After the Secretary's phone call with the Chinese Foreign Minister, the Chinese Foreign Ministry put out an announcement in which they emphasize both agreed to continue with the high-level exchange, high-level meeting. One of the meetings is a strategic and economic dialogue --

MS. NULAND: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- and under which there is a specific bilateral dialogue on human rights.

MS. NULAND: Right.

QUESTION: I just wonder what is the status of the human rights dialogue between China and the United States? What's the timeline?

MS. NULAND: Well, you know that we have had a robust dialogue. Assistant Secretary Posner has led that for this Department. I think we've had three rounds in the last two years, including Chinese human rights stakeholders coming here, lawyers, et cetera. So it's been a very important aspect of the strategic and economic dialogue that we've had. I don't have any information to share at the moment about whether there are going to be any changes to that structure under the Kerry State Department. But I would expect that in some fashion, our strong – we will have an interest, obviously, in a strong human rights dialogue continuing.

February 5, 2013

Victoria Nuland, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing

Washington, DC

Selections on China

QUESTION: A quick question on North Korea. If you can please be more specific on Secretary Kerry's telephone call with Chinese counterpart on North Korean issue?

MS. NULAND: I think I gave you what we wanted to share with regard to that. As I said, when he spoke to his Japanese counterpart, his Korean counterpart, and now his Chinese counterpart, the conversation was remarkably similar, that we are all concerned that despite the strong measures taken in 2007, the provocative rhetoric continues, which means that we've all got to stay unified in watching this and making absolutely clear to Pyongyang that if it takes further action, so will we.

QUESTION: Tora, you suggested on Monday that – and correct me if I'm wrong – that there was agreement between the Secretary and his counterparts in South Korea and Japan that there needed to be – that there was an agreement that new sanctions might need to be imposed if North Korea were to go ahead with whatever this thing is they're planning. Did that come up as well with Mr. Yang? And if so, what was the Chinese's reaction to perhaps new sanctions?

MS. NULAND: Well, I'm not going to go into any further detail about the conversation between the two ministers beyond saying what I said a few minutes ago, which is that conversations were remarkably similar in terms of the importance of ensuring that if we need to implement the commitments in 2007, that we will.

QUESTION: So does that mean that --

MS. NULAND: What I mean is the --

MS. NULAND: -- commitment to further action.

QUESTION: When I asked about possible other topics that might have been raised during that call, you're saying there weren't any, the only ones were DPRK, Iran, and the P-5+1?

MS. NULAND: I'm saying those are the topics that we're sharing today.

QUESTION: Okay. Well, how about Japan and this accusation by the Japanese that the Chinese have locked radar onto one of their destroyers? Did that come up, or is that something that

doesn't rise to the – something you don't think is serious and doesn't rise to the level of the Secretary mentioning it to the Chinese Foreign Minister?

MS. NULAND: Well, beyond saying that regional security issues as a whole came up, I'm not going to get into any further detail of the phone conversation. I will say that with regard to the reports of this particular lock-on incident, actions such as this escalate tensions and increase the risk of an incident or a miscalculation, and they could undermine peace, stability, and economic growth in this vital region. So we are concerned about it.

QUESTION: I mean, did it or did it not come up with the conversation with the Chinese? And if you don't know, that's one thing. If you do know and you've been – there's been some decision made that you don't want to say that it came up in the conversation, I'd like to know the rationale behind it. It seems to me that Japan is a treaty ally of the United States, and if there is a belligerent action taken against a treaty ally of the United States, it would seem to me to be entirely appropriate for the Secretary of State to raise that with the country that committed the belligerent act.

MS. NULAND: Again, Matt, I will – I'm happy to check on your specific issue. We have shared today what we care to share from that conversation, including the fact that it covered regional security. But I will check on your question.

February 1, 2013

Victoria Nuland, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing
Washington, DC
Selections on China

QUESTION: First to follow up on the freedom of press, early this week *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* have reported that their websites have been hacked by someone in China. Do you think this is an attack on freedom of press, hacking of these websites news organizations?

MS. NULAND: Well, obviously, I mean, we have had and been very clear about our substantial and growing concerns about the threats of economic – to economic and national security posed by cyber intrusions, including the theft of commercial information. We have been clear with the Government of China that we need to continue to talk about this. I think you know that Secretary Clinton initiated a dialogue on cyber security as part of our regular security and economic dialogue with the Government of China. The *New York Times*' experience mirrors that of individuals and organizations across the U.S. government and private sector, and we are encouraging those who have had these experiences, whether they're in China or anywhere else in the world, to share them and to take this opportunity to review their security protocols, because this is unfortunately a substantial and growing concern.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) question on Tibet. This week two Tibetans were sentenced by a Chinese court over self-immolation. What's your reaction to that? How do you see this?

MS. NULAND: We are aware that there are reports that Chinese authorities have handed down sentences to two Tibetans for allegedly inciting the self-immolation of others. As we have regularly said, the United States wants to see these kinds of tragic acts of self-immolation come to an end, and we continue both publicly and privately to urge the Chinese government at all levels to address policies in Tibet – in Tibetan areas that have created tensions and that threaten the distinct religious, cultural, and linguistic identity of the Tibetan people. And we take this opportunity once again to call on the Chinese government to permit Tibetans to express their grievances freely, publicly, peacefully, and without fear of retribution.